ack. 7/17/17 Nat. Indus. Conf. Bd
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National Civic Federation Will Consider Industrial and Military Problems Growing Out of the War

AT ITS ANNUAL MEETING

The seventeenth annual meeting of The National Civic Federation will be held in New York City, at Hotel Astor, on Monday and Tuesday, January 22-23, 1917, the luncheon of the Woman's Department occurring Monday, and the annual banquet on Tuesday evening.

In addition to the resumé of the year's work by President V. Everit Macy at the opening session, departmental reports will be made by L. A. Coolidge for the Welfare Department, August Belmont for the Workmen's Compensation Department, Warren S. Stone for the Social Insurance Department, John Hays Hammond for the Industrial Economics Department, Miss Maude Wetmore for the Woman's Department, Alton B. Parker for the Department on Reform in Legal Procedure, Jeremiah W. Jenks for the Department on Regulation of Industrial Corporations, Louis B. Schram for the Industrial Accident Prevention Department, and A. J. Porter for the Minimum Wage Commission.

The other sessions of the meeting will be devoted to the consideration of some of the larger economic and military problems confronting the American people during and at the close of the European war, such as:

'The lesson from the mobilization on the Mexican border';

'The indifference, if not positive opposition, of the wage-earners and farmers to all preparedness programs';

'Will there be a flood of immigration or a flood of emigration?'

'Must this country, to secure military efficiency, copy the paternalistic social program of Germany?' and

'Can the great forces of production, of labor, and of finance be cemented into one big force to grapple with the oncoming problems?'

Commenting upon the subjects to be considered at this meeting, in a statement issued to the members of the Federation, Ralph M. Easley, Chairman of the Executive Council, says:

"Whether the present move to end the great international conflict proves effective or abortive, it vividly suggests the economic disturbance that is bound to occur in this country when peace does come. With our business to-day at such an abnormal tension that panicky conditions are as readily created by a threat of peace as by a threat of war; with the plants of the munition and kindred industries shutting down in case of peace and throwing out thousands of wage-earners; and with the probable cancelling of war bonuses and lowering of abnormal wages in other lines, resulting in a possible unemployment situation similar to the one experienced in the winter of 1914-15, is it not time for the leaders of production, of labor and of finance to prepare to meet co-operatively that inevitable army would necessarily come from these classes. A comparatively small percentage of the members of our National Guard to-day is drawn from the wage-earning or farming population. If any arguments are needed to emphasize the absolute necessity of having the hearty co-operation of these two preponderating forces, they can be supplied by the discussions in the parliamentary bodies of all the warring nations. Little chance will there be for compulsory military service or even a compulsory military training bill to become a law in this country, if they are required, until these problems are solved and also the great Middle West comes to feel that it is as directly concerned in the defenses of the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts as are the seaboard states. It is true that foreign fleets cannot as yet climb mountains or throw their shells 2,000 miles, but the Zeppelins and aeroplanes, the navies of the air, can reach Chicago and Topeka as easily as New York or San Francisco. But even were the Middle West secure from direct attack, the paralysis of its industries and the stoppage of the movement of its farm products would be just as great if the seaboard states capitulated to an invading force."

SOME REASONS FOR PACIFISM

"It is not surprising that there should be such pacifism among people who had settled down to the conviction that civilization—religion, art and the sciences—had made wars a thing of the past. But there are some curious phases of the situation that are not so clearly understood. For instance, at a time when, in all the great countries of Europe, the working men are pouring out their life's blood and the working women are making untold sacrifices to save their countries from destruction, we have in this country the spectacle of a body of professedly anti-patriotic people, composed of radical preachers, radical college professors, socialists, anarchists and extreme pacifists, viciously denouncing all proposals to prepare our nation for defending itself against threatened attacks from either without or within. And this they are doing in spite of the generally recognized fact that our country is to-day almost equally hated by the people of the Entente Allies and those of the Central Powers, and that, while to-day we might have to prepare for attack by the Central Powers should they win, to-morrow such attack might come from the Allies should they be victorious; or the next day we might have both groups to fight in case they should arrive at an adjustment of their differences, and should feel that our gold and great wealth might be needed to pay some of their staggering war debts, or that South America might be a good country to divide up. In connection with this fact it has been asserted that a high official in Germany said to the American Ambassador last fall, when the Sussex controversy was at an acute stage: "Do you realize, Mr. Ambassador, that we have 500,000 trained and armed soldiers in your country?" At that the Ambassador retorted: "Do you realize that we have 500,000 lamp-posts in our country?" This was a splendid retort, but hardly an adequate answer, although it was the only one he could make. But this alarming fact, if a fact, the pacifist might say, is more than offset by another statement from an officer of the Entente Allies' army, who pointed out that Canada would, at the close of the war, have a million trained soldiers on our north, who might have some suggestions to make to us about the conduct of our internal affairs. In that event the 500,000 trained German reservists

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MILITARY PROBLEMS

"Not only is there need for such co-operation to grapple with economic problems, but there is also as great a need for co-operation among all elements in the nation to guard against possible military complications that may arise during this war, should it continue indefinitely, or if, at its close, a peace should be established that only means an armistice of longer or shorter duration to be followed by a greater war which the President predicts the United States will enter.

"Referring to the military situation, there will be frank discussion at the Federation's meeting upon two disturbing phases which our people must face to-day.

"The first of these is that our military and naval schemes for preparedness are in chaos—and this not due to want of patriotism on the part of any particular administration, but to a lack of foresight on the part of all administrations since the Spanish War. This again is nothing but a natural situation growing out of the belief of our people, thanks to the activities of the peace societies of the world, that all wars between civilized nations had been made impossible and that the development of armies and navies was rapidly becoming superfluous; that we were 3,000 miles from anybody who could possibly think of attacking us, and that it would take so long for any nation to get troops over here that we could equip an army of a million men in ample time to 'eat them up,' so to speak, as they landed. It is unnecessary to say that these illusions have been dispelled, the latter one by our recent attempt to mobilize 100,000 men on the Mexican border. It is generally agreed by experts that that mobilization, whatever the expense, and even if there had been no military necessity to justify it, was worth many times what it cost in enabling us to discover the utter weakness of our uncoordinated federal and state military systems, and the utter futility, not to say injustice of depending on the National Guard as constituted to-day for a first line of defense.

"The second fact which stares us in the face is that in all movements for preparedness—defense leagues, security leagues and so forth—there are enrolled neither the workingmen nor the farmers of the country. On the executive boards of these organizations, not one representative of either of these classes can be found, while they are found without number in all of the anti-preparedness and various brands of peace organizations. This is an alarming element of national weakness, as in any war eighty per cent of our army would necessarily come from these classes. A comparatively small percentage of the members of our National Guard to-day is drawn from the wage-earning or farming population. If any arguments are needed to emphasize the absolute necessity of having the hearty co-operation of these two preponderating forces, they can be supplied by the discussions in the parliamentary bodies of all the warring nations. Little chance will there be for compulsory military service or even a compulsory military training bill to become a law in this country, if they are required, until these problems are solved and also the great Middle West comes to feel that it is as directly concerned in the defenses of the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts as are the seaboard states. It is true that foreign fleets cannot as yet climb mountains or throw their shells 2,000 miles, but the Zeppelins and aeroplanes, the navies of the air, can reach Chicago and Topeka as easily as New York or San Francisco. But even were the Middle West secure from direct attack, the paralysis of its industries and the stoppage of the movement of its farm products would be just as great as the seaboard states capitulated to an invading force."

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"Even the schoolhouses are being turned over to some of these radical anti-patriots, who are calmly debating the question, 'Is this country fit to be defended?' the 'debate' being participated in only by those who answer the question in the negative. In these same schoolhouses, as well as in certain pulpits, there is heard their bitter denunciation of everything that savors of patriotism, even the word acting as a red rag. This hatred of patriotism is taught to the children in the Socialist Sunday schools, the word being placed on banners in the form of an acrostic, as follows:

Powder
Asinity
Trouble
R
I
O
T
Idiocy
Suffering
Murder

Instead of patriotism they are taught "internationalism," that being their fad of the hour notwithstanding the fact that internationalism has been shot to pieces in every country of Europe by the very socialists whose pre-war antics these people are now aping.

"It will not do to belittle the effect of this propaganda on the ground that the Socialist Party, which has been largely leading this movement, fell back over 40 per cent in its votes at the recent election, because the significance of the socialist sentiment in this country cannot be based upon its votes, most of the socialists remaining aliens, and boasting of the fact. Besides, there are several thousands of them in colleges, in pulpits, and in magazine and newspaper offices, where they can exercise a sinister influence. Again, the socialists' fight against preparedness is not at all from the same standpoint as is that of William Jennings Bryan, Henry Ford or Jane Addams, who base their pacifism on their beautiful ideals of universal peace and the brotherhood of man. The socialists do not want the Government to have back of it an effective army and navy, because they are trying to speed the day when they can overturn it and confiscate all the productive industries of the country. In so doing naturally they do not want to have to meet an efficient military force.

"The frank purpose of the socialists was voiced in an editorial in *The New York Call*, the semi-official mouthpiece of that cult at the beginning of the war when it said:

"We have not started this thing (the war) and we hope that our correspondents will comprehend us when we say that, now that it is started, the most cold-blooded calculation on our part at the present moment is that they should all bleed each other to exhaustion so that the coming social revolution may have an easier job of sweeping out the stinking fragments. We are through with protesting, mourning and deploring. THAT TIME HAS PASSED AND NOW WE STAND FOR DESTRUCTION—THE DESTRUCTION OF CAPITALISM."

IMMIGRATION

Another problem growing out of the war which will be discussed and which seems to baffle any attempt at solution is the question of immigration. Those who contend that, at the close of the world conflict, we shall have a flood of immigration and those who contend that we shall have a flood of emigration have equally strong arguments. So likewise have those who predict that when peace is restored we shall have so many thousands of men thrown out of work in the munition and exporting industries that the unemployment problem again will confront us; and, in the same way, those who claim that the demands abroad for all our products, excepting war supplies, will be so great that these extra workers will be more than absorbed, resulting again in a serious shortage of labor.

"Is our nation helpless in this situation, and must it wait until the end of the war to see who is right? Cannot the Government deal with the admission of aliens similarly as it expects to deal with the admission of foreign products? Should not the importation of wage-earners be regulated as certainly as should be the importation of manufactured products? If we are going to lodge in the Government an elastic power to protect our manufactures in this country, should we not also lodge in this same Government an elastic power to regulate the dumping of an oversupply of wage-earners upon our shores?

"There are many organizations dealing with the immigration question from various standpoints. Some would make this country an asylum for all the oppressed of Europe; others see in free immigration only the demands of the employers for an oversupply of labor to hold down wages; some would shut down the gates of Ellis Island completely for ten years; and strangely enough this demand comes both from trade unionists and certain employers, while others have developed such elaborate schemes to educate and improve the lot of immigrants that it practically amounts to a discrimination in favor of the foreign born over the native, and has the effect of dangling before the poverty-stricken of Europe the alluring promise of an education and a job.

"That these international humanitarians in our midst will have abundant material to work upon, unless prevented by our Government, is stated by Judge Henry Neil of Chicago, who recently returned from a visit to England. Judge Neill is the author of the Mothers' Pension system, and his trip to Europe was in the interests of that proposal. In an interview he stated:

'The Salvation Army in England is collecting large sums of money for the advertised purpose of shipping the war widows and orphans to other countries on the plea that England will not be able to care for the millions made dependent by war.'

"The proposal to give the Government a free hand in dealing with the admission of aliens, just as it will doubtless be empowered to deal through the Tariff Commission with the admission of products, having in mind the interests of this nation alone, will be considered at the annual meeting, and if peace, whether temporary or permanent, should come out of the present efforts the United States might have to face this vital problem very soon.

PATERNALISTIC PROPOSALS

"A doctrine that is gaining considerable headway in this country, and one that will be discussed at the Federation's meeting, is that the great efficiency of Germany, as shown in her phenomenal military triumphs, is largely due to the humanitarian interest of the government in the welfare of the working classes, evidenced by its provisions for old age pensions, sickness and unemployment insurance, death benefits, so-called model housing schemes, and so forth. It is claimed that these measures have abolished poverty and pauperism, and have produced a contentment of mind unknown in this country.

"The argument is made, therefore, that if the United States is ever to be efficient in a military sense, it must adopt these same policies, and there are organizations devoted to the promotion of such schemes which make a powerful appeal to those who realize the real need to minimize conditions of poverty.

"It is claimed by many writers that even individualistic England will emerge from the war as a socialist state because of the taking over by the Government, under military necessity, of the direction of all private industries producing war supplies.

"These ideas do not all emanate from socialists and other radicals, but can be found in the utterance of many men in the so-called world of capital. The military successes of Germany in the war have so impressed the American public that anything that is stated in reference to her successes along industrial lines is accepted without question.

The absurdity of comparing the conditions of the working people in Germany as well as in England with the working conditions of wage earners in this country is too apparent to merit serious consideration. It is asserted that the official figures in 1914, for instance, showed that Berlin had more paupers per thousand than New York City, while it is stated on good authority that over 50 per cent of the families in Berlin live in two-room apartments, a kitchen and a living room—not a very wholesome housing situation. While in the matter of the prohibition of child labor, this country is in advance of any other in the world. And yet, a campaign of misinformation on the alleged advantages of the foreign workingman over the American is being conducted in this country without any challenge from those who are qualified to deny its soundness. But even if these measures referred to succeeded in abolishing poverty and making the workingmen contented, is there not a larger question in the background which would impel the American people to pause before adopting the same policies? It is the evil effects of a paternalistic government on the moral fibre of the people.

"This objection is well versed by that veteran labor leader, Samuel Gompers, President of the American Federation of Labor, who stated recently with reference to the contemplated legislation for compulsory health insurance:

"'Compulsory social insurance, in the countries in which it has been established, has taken the red blood out of the labor movement and out of the activities of the working people, and they have looked to the Government to do the thing for them that the men could do for themselves. It is a reversal of the whole policy and the historic development of the Anglo-Saxon race, and every movement of that character for the introduction of compulsory social insurance will simply take away so much of the self-reliance, the self-assertiveness of the men and women, and instead of their being red-blooded men and women who would present their claims upon their employers and society in assertion of their rights, they would look to Government to take care of them—not to themselves; and think that, in casting their votes once every two or four years, their destinies would be determined, and that in the periods between they would have nothing to do. As to the relative merits of what is proposed, we have done so much in improving the physique, the health, the mind of the workers, that, although it is all too slow, our voluntary system presents the only natural and rational movement consistent with freedom. We have learned to know what freedom is and what it means.'

"The position taken by Mr. Gompers on this matter is the same as the official position of the American Federation of Labor at its last two annual meetings, and also the position taken by the railway brotherhoods.

"This subject will be discussed at the Civic Federation's meeting.

THE RAILROAD CONTROVERSY

"Since our last annual meeting, the most serious rupture threatened between capital and labor, so-called, was that between the railway brotherhoods and the railroad systems. It grew out of the demand by the 400,000 members of these brotherhoods for an eight-hour day, with time and one-half as overtime pay. If that threatened strike had occurred, it would, in its magnitude and frightfulness of results, have borne the same relation to any previous industrial disturbance in this country as that borne by the present world war to any previous military conflict. This controversy was adjusted by an almost revolutionary legislative measure which, if it remains on the statute books, is likely to result in a number of evils only less harmful than the alternative of the strike.

For years The National Civic Federation and all friends of what is termed 'the labor movement' have been promoting collective bargaining as the most intelligent and humane method of dealing between employers and employees. And yet, when put to the most crucial test, the highest type of collective bargaining utterly failed between the largest and most intelligent organizations of wage earners and of capital. Does that therefore argue the inadequacy of collective bargaining? The National Civic Federation had been responsible for the drafting of the so-called Newlands Federal Mediation Act which replaced the Erdman Act. Congress had passed the Newlands Act at the request of the railroads, the brotherhoods, and of the Civic Federation, all having declared their belief that its enactment into law would almost certainly prevent further large labor disturbances upon railroads, and yet in the recent crisis it proved totally ineffective. In view of this shattering of some of the illusions of the friends of arbitration, mediation, and collective bargaining, the Federation's committee on Mediation Legislation began at once the drafting of a proposed substitute measure to present to Congress which it hopes will prove more effective in the future. This bill and the reasons for it will also be discussed at the forthcoming annual meeting of the Federation.

INTERNATIONAL PEACE PROPOSALS

A question that looms large on the public horizon at this moment is, "What part shall this nation play in any international program looking toward the prevention of future wars?"

The most widely advertised movement is that which seeks to secure a league of nations to enforce peace. This organization is led by some of our most distinguished publicists, headed by Ex-President William Howard Taft.

Another movement, which is led by former Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan, is promoting the principles of what are termed the Bryan Treaties, which have already been entered into between the United States and nearly all the principal nations of the world excepting the Central Powers.

There is a third movement looking to the establishment of a World Court, which is to be organized jointly by all nations, and to which all matters of dispute are to be referred. The aims of the first two movements are so diametrically opposed that their respective leaders, Mr. William Howard Taft and Mr. William Jennings Bryan, have announced a series of joint public debates to discuss their differences.

There is a fourth view, however, which is not crystallized into an organization, but which is radically opposed to the first two proposals and is not enthusiastic over the third as a practical proposition, although, being a voluntary movement, it does not arouse the same criticism as the other two.

The part of the program of the League to Enforce Peace which most excites opposition is the proposal that the United States shall use its naval, military and economic forces, in conjunction with other nations, against any nation that goes to war without first having submitted its case to a judicial tribunal for hearing and judgment, both upon the merits of its case and upon any issue as to its jurisdiction of the question. Or, if the tribunal decided that it is not a justiciable question, "it shall be submitted to a council for hearing, consideration and recommendation only."

It is contended by the experts in dealing with industrial strife that the principles underlying international and industrial disputes are identical and that the same reasons that cause compulsory industrial arbitration to fail will render nugatory any attempt at compulsory international arbitration.

All these viewpoints will be presented at the annual meeting of The National Civic Federation.

WOMAN'S DEPARTMENT

The annual meeting of the Woman's Department will be held coincidently, and among the subjects which will be considered are the national policy on prison reform; country life and rural betterment problems; the general subject of immigration as it affects woman; endowment fund for chair for rural nursing, and woman's part in the development of the idea of universal service to the State, especially dealing with physical training in the schools.

You Are Cordially Invited to Attend. If You Will be Present, Kindly Reply on the Enclosed Card